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# The Decorator and Furnisher.

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THE Fourth Semi-Annual Exposition of the American Furniture Manufacturers' Association will take place on the 9th of January, and will remain open until the 4th of February next. The exhibit covers a total area of 250,000 square feet of floor space, and embraces the spring styles from 100 leading manufacturers, East and West.

Judging from the number of manufacturers who have applied for space at the Exposition, we anticipate the Fourth Semi-Annual Exhibit will be no less important than other winter exhibits, and the dealer will find every possible variety of modern furniture in all styles of design and at all prices. The new styles will incline to reproductions of the Sheraton, Chippendale, Louis Quinze, Louis Seize, Empire and Renaissance styles. All the requirements of modern luxuriously furnished interiors are represented, and there is an unlimited variety in designs of the furniture at the disposal of the trade. The exigencies of the modern furniture trade demand a constantly increasing effort on the part of the manufacturer in the way of something new, artistic and desirable that will not be a too violent departure from the prevailing styles. Furniture, original in construction, is manufactured without any undue violation of utilitarian demands. The display at the Exposition will meet all the requirements of the trade, and furniture will be exhibited that could not have been excelled by the old masters themselves in choice and durable workmanship.

The style of American furniture is exceedingly diversified, and in fact it may be said to represent the entire gamut of the 18th century styles, modified with due regard to the feeling and taste of modern times. In the richer forms of the furniture exhibited will be found Louis Quatorze furniture in Boule and gilt, Louis Quinze screens, chairs and cabinets in Vernis Martin and inlay; Louis Seize suites, either in gilt or in the natural color exhibited, in company with Empire furniture in the form of parlor suites, pedestals, bedroom suites and quaint mirrors.

IT is curious to see how the habits and customs of the day govern embroidery. To-day the luncheon party and the afternoon tea determine the style of embroidery most in demand. Every possible fad of fashion is humored to make more ornate the elaborately served luncheon table. The finest of linen is used, the daintiest embroidery silks, white or colored, or white with gold thread, and the most elaborate drawn work

with the finest of lace stitches. Nothing is too fine, too exquisite, too delicately frail in stitch, material or design to serve the fashionable, Epicurean, modern ladies' luncheon. There are center pieces, carving cloths, tea tray cloths, dainty doilies, cake plate, bread plate and butter plate napkins; and even tiny circles of linen hemstitched, fringed and embroidered with garlands of pink and blue posies are offered for sale and designated as "individual butters." What more can be desired? The best of this is certainly very beautiful work. The white and gold thread embroidery is deservedly popular. The white, with washing, takes a pale yellow tint that is very attractive. Center pieces are often made on heavier linen or duck with a button-holed edge, which is cut out so as to emphasize the shape of the leaves and flowers of the design.

THOSE familiar with the growth of flowers know how essential light is to the creation of color. The most gaudy bloom and most brilliant foliage, if kept in the dark, or overshadowed, will become pale, and almost white. This fact shows the presence in the plant of some chemical agent which is acted upon by the actinic rays. To some extent this chemistry of nature is understood by florists, who, by the use of chemical manures and other means, strive to take the greatest advantage of it. For instance, it is a common practice to mix alum and iron filings with the soil in which certain plants are grown, in order to bring out certain colors. The blueish-tinted hydrangea is the result of such treatment. Salts of iron, or sodium phosphate, added to the soil, turn the crimson of the peony to violet, and produce blue hortensias. According to Dr. Hansen, who has studied the subject very closely for many years, there are only three distinct pigments to be found in flowers, setting aside the chlorophyll, which forms the green coloring matter in all plants. These colors are yellows, reds and blues. The yellows are mostly in combination with the plasmic sap, while the others exist chiefly in solution in the cell sap. The yellow pigments from an insoluble compound with fatty matters, and is termed lipochrome. Orange is formed by a denser deposit of the yellow, and the color in the rind of an orange is identical with that found in many flowers. The red in flowers is a single pigment soluble in water, and decolorized by alcohol; but capable of being restored by the addition of acids. Lipochrome, combined with this red pigment, produces the scarlets and reds of poppies and of the hips of hawthorns; but the varying intensity of reds in roses, carnations, peonies, and other flowers, depends on the presence of a greater or a lesser quantity of acids. The blue and violet colors are also decolorized by alcohol, but are reddened by acids. Florists have already succeeded in producing a very large scale of unusual colors in flowers, and there seems to be very good grounds for believing that it is possible so to manipulate nature that she will produce blossoms of every conceivable tint and hue.

AFTER the Empire—what? We think the next fashionable style will be the Italian Renaissance, the most beautiful of all Renaissance styles. There is a refined vigor about this style which will be refreshing after we have become surfeited with the more or less dillettante French and English eighteenth century styles, that are now so much in vogue.

In the original developments of the Renaissance there is a great deal both in the proportion and the embellishment of the articles that is hardly appropriate for domestic furniture. A great deal of the carving is simply grotesque, and even comical in its absurdity, and if the manufacturers will restrain themselves to reproductions of the simpler and more dainty Cinquecento styles very beautiful and effective results will ensue which will materially enhance the impression of stability which this style of furniture impresses upon us.

From the Italian Renaissance grew the Renaissance of Spain, the Francois Premier of France, and the Elizabethan of England and the Renaissance of Germany and the Low Countries. Each of these offsprings had its National characteristics, and in the course of time each one became distinct from the other, and there is no reason why a new development of the style cannot be created to be known as the American Renaissance.

The Sheraton and Chippendale are pronounced and distinct styles of furniture, the former being essentially English in

character. It is a delicate and comely mode, whereas the Chippendale is an eccentric, clever, but stately and interesting fashion in the arts of furnishing. The delicate taste of Sheraton is characterized by fine balance of proportion, simplicity of arrangement, enriched with delicate lines of bands of marquetry and the inlaid arabesques peculiar to the mode. Sheraton was both imaginative and practical, and the restrained beauty that marks the furniture of this accomplished artist is a standard of industrial art.

Chippendale, on the other hand, loved to reproduce quaint and grotesque fancies, his conceptions being encumbered with the eccentricities of Chinese and Gothic taste. His cabinets were intended to be filled with Chinese pottery and Celestial curios, which were then greatly admired by the wealthy, who required a style of furniture in harmony with their bric-a-brac. Notwithstanding his eccentricities, we cannot help admiring the beauty and spiritedness that characterized his work.

Both the Sheraton and the Chippendale will always find a place among the various styles, on account of their beauty, as well as on account of old associations.

REGARDED purely from a utilitarian stand-point, with no reference whatever to their contents, but simply looked at as furniture, the value of books can hardly be overestimated. Although popularly supposed to be dear, books, considered as investments, are amazingly cheap. In no other direction does so small an expenditure go so far in returning good value for money spent.

To say nothing of the obvious fact that the presence of books in assemblages, so to speak, at once sets a stamp of cultivation on a household, giving it a certificate of refinement which neither costly bric-a-brac nor beautiful upholstery can confer, books are decorative. They lend themselves to the furnishing of alcoves and corners. They are beautiful in shape and charming in color, and marshalled in rows in bookcases tall and stately or bookcases low and cosy, they form agreeable points on which the eye can rest. A bright red book makes a spot from which other colors radiate pleasantly. It is garnered sunshine in a permanent form.

Books lying about on tables, or placed in quaintly carved racks, or standing on brackets, take away from the bareness of a room, and impart to it an exquisite living quality, a quality of life.

This is inseparable from the idea of a book, which is really a bit of embalmed personality, the exhalation of a human soul saved to an earthly immortality. Women always love their "things" in a clinging way to which men are usually strangers. But a man loves his books, loves to see them around him, loves to sit surrounded by them as by friends while he enjoys the ease of slippers and the homely luxury of an evening pipe.

Let nobody fancy herself extravagant when she buys a book. Books are to be owned, not to be borrowed. Is there lacking to your best room the nameless distinction which you have sought in vain, in rugs of price, in faintly toned and glimmering draperies, in billowy chairs and pillowy divans? Let the carpenter construct for you a set of shelves, of pine, if you do not desire a costlier wood. Pine is a fragrant, close-grained wood, beautiful in itself, and easily stained, if a deeper tone is required. Have your shelves low. On the upper one leave space for a bit of royal Worcester or of Lowestoft, for a statuette or a candlestick. Arrange your books below—Black and Besant, Hardy, Dickens, Scott, and others who have given you of their intellectual wealth. Your Shakespeare is of course a many volumed, annotated set—Rolfe's probably—for you must have a Shakespeare you can hold in your hand and slip under the pillow on your lounge. You need a shelf for Shakespeare. And when the book-shelves are made and filled, your room is no longer bare; it is well furnished.

In a little hamlet among the hills, remote from a railroad, in a region where the good wife still sews her rags into great many-colored balls, and weaves her own carpet at her own hand-loom, there stands a house most simply, yet most luxuriously furnished. No curtains to hide the hills that go to sleep daily opposite the windows, and awake in the morning flushed and rosy like children opening sweet eyes to the new day. No rugs on the floors, few pictures on the walls, but everywhere books—in the mother's chamber, in the boys' room, in the father's study. And the house is abundantly furnished.